

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

FRENCH REVOLUTION 230 YEARS AFTER – A CRITICAL VIEW

Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade, Serbia

14-15 October 2019

There are few historical events that aspired to such a radical and so comprehensive change of reality as it was the case with the French Revolution. Simultaneously, despite its radicalism, there are only a few events in world history around which, at least on the continent, so firm consensus has been created. Not only has the Revolution itself been positively evaluated but also all of its (conceptual) consequences have been accepted without critical assessment. On the other hand, too often have the dark sides of the Revolution been interpreted only as exaggerations and deviation or as deterioration of basically good ideas. In the context of this, the critics of the Revolution have often been pushed aside and marginalized, and – like in the time of Revolution – labeled as “obscurants”.

This dominant black and white image is far from objective historical reality. The anniversary might be seen as a good opportunity for a critical reflection on the Revolution as a historical event, and for rethinking its ideological postulates, intellectual roots, and its spiritual and political legacies. Under the phrase “the consequences of the Revolution” one has to have in mind its intellectual heritage, that is, the influence it has left on the formation of modern political ideologies, especially totalitarian ones.

From its outbreak, unlike earlier times, the Revolution has massively politicized and divided public across Europe and almost every single political theorist of the 19th century had to define his own attitude according to revolutionary ideas. Therefore, it is necessary to critically assess the influence of revolutionary, i.e. contra-revolutionary ideas outside France. The question arises in what degree population of European states was truly prepared to accept French ideas, i.e. to show a solidarity with Paris revolutionaries.

The issue of the channels through which revolutionary ideas were spread across Europe is also of special concern. This particularly regards actions of “pilgrims of Revolution” and various European clubs that served as hubs of the revolutionary propaganda dissemination; namely, as a support to the French army. Regarding the revolutionary ideas, a light should be again shed on the connection between revolutionary terror and revolutionary ideals, both in and outside France. There can

be no doubt anymore that the terror during the Revolution – in its overall scope, was not just an accidental outburst of violence but was rather firmly embedded in its pillars from the beginning, as its inseparable part.

It is necessary to pay a special attention to the counter-revolutionary side as well, particularly because of the politicization of public opinion under the influence of the Revolution. The counter-revolutionary camp was far less homogeneous as it might seem at the first glance because not everyone has opposed revolution from the same reasons nor for the same ideal. European monarchies were not ready for the battle over ideas, so the spiritual defense against the Revolution was mainly in the domain of individual writers who were sometimes gathered within a few relatively short-lived journals. One should not forget the fact that many of those who supported the Revolution at the beginning very soon became its fierce opponents (Edmund Burke, Luis de Bonald, Friedrich von Gentz, Joseph Görres).

We invite the papers on the following topics:

- The intellectual causes and ideological roots of the Revolution
- The course of the Revolution and its crimes
- The work of sympathizers of the Revolution outside France
- Individual rebellions and conspiracies in European countries and their connection with France
- Impact and consequences of the Revolution on other European countries
- Defense of European monarchies against revolutionary ideas
- Criticism of the Revolution and counter-revolutionary thought in France and Europe
- The battle over ideas and pamphlets in Europe
- Perception of the Revolution in Europe today – how the Revolution was dogmatized
- The intellectual legacy of the Revolution
- Contemporary ideologies and attitude towards the Revolution

Abstracts of no more than 500 words are to be sent to frcb@ips.ac.rs.

The deadline for the abstracts is 30.4.2019.

Notice of acceptance of papers will be sent by May 30, 2019.

The working language of the conference is English.

The Institute for Political Studies covers accommodation costs for participants.

The papers presented at the conference will be published in the special volume.